VII. GOVERNMENT

631 In describing Tanala government it is necessary to treat the Menabe and Ikongo divisions separately. Until about one hundred years ago the Menabe had no political or governmental unit larger than the gens. Later, with the aid of the Imerina empire, the Zafakotry gens succeeded in bringing several of the other gentes under its domination and a kingdom was established. This kingdom tried to copy the organization of the Imerina kingdom, but it never became well integrated or thoroughly organized. The Ikongo, on the other hand, had kingdoms of long standing and had developed a stable system of government with officials of varying rank.

The Menabe

618 Among the Menabe each village was practically autonomous. The authority of the chief of the gens was recognized, but he never 643 interfered in village affairs and was only appealed to in disputes between villages or in serious criminal cases. Each village had a 622 chief, the *Andriandahy*, who was elected informally and could be deposed at will. There were no ceremonies of investiture and he had no special insignia. He was considered simply the first among equals. To be eligible for the office a man had to be personally popular, rich, generous, a good diplomat, a good warrior and a good orator. The *Andriandahy* had no authority over the persons or property of the other villagers. His duties were to advise and help them, to act as arbitrator in minor disputes, if brought to him voluntarily, to organize and coordinate communal activities, seeing that labor and expense were equitably divided, and to act as representative for his village in its dealings with other villages or with the chief of the gens. The office carried no salary or perquisites, beyond personal exemption [117] from labor. Under French control the office of *Andriandahy* has been retained and its powers and its responsibilities considerably increased. He must provide the quotas of men demanded by the government for forced labor and cannot be deposed by the village without government consent. Bribes to the *Andriandahy* are now common.

623 The affairs of the village were controlled by a group of important men, comparable to the "key men" of American communities. The position was unofficial and the natives seem to have had no generic term for such leaders. They are now referred to by the French word

the invaders lived in compact gentile groups, but in time certain families or lineages left the gens territory and settled among the aborigines, seizing control. These small ruling groups kept touch with their parent gens for a time and relied on it for support, but they intermarried with their subjects and fused with them racially and culturally. Their descendants in the male line came to constitute a noble caste with representatives in all the groups. Although these nobles claimed a common origin and were jealous of their social privileges they no longer considered themselves as a political unit. Although they would assist each other if the commoners rose against them they frequently fought among themselves, leading their followers of aboriginal stock against each other. Even in such wars they still recognised the blood bond to the extent that it was taboo for a commoner to kill the enemy king, although a noble would do so without hesitation (see Warfare).

Apparently there were many Ikongo villages which did not include members of *hova* ("noble") caste. Even when they were present their influence was not preponderant in local affairs. The village government was essentially the same as the Menabe. There was an elected chief, usually not a noble, who acted as executive, and a *Fokonolona* ("council"). Each gens had a chief called the *Mpanaka* who was elected from the members of the *hova* caste. Prerequisites for the office were the same as for the Menabe *Anakandriana*. The *Mpanaka* was chosen by the village chiefs and *Notables* of the entire gens, irrespective of caste, and could be deposed at will. Associated with him were one or more officials called *Anakandriana*, who were elected on the same basis and in the same way as the *Mpanaka*, but must be of *mainka* ("common") caste. Theoretically the *Anakandriana* acted as counselors and executives, but actually they often seem to have had as much power as the *Mpanaka*, who was unable to remove them from office. The whole arrangement strongly suggested a dual chieftainship.

Kingdoms arose, as among the Menabe, through one gens acquiring domination over others. The king, also called *Mpanaka*, was chosen from among the *hova* of the dominant group. Like the gens chiefs, he was assisted by elected *Anakandriana* whom he could not dismiss. These *Anakandriana* might be chosen from any gens within the kingdom, but were always of *mainka* caste. Usually all gens were represented among them and they formed a sort of permanent council with a sharp check on the conduct of the *Mpanaka*. They exercised executive functions and continued in office